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Viewing cable 08MANAGUA1383, NICARAGUA: ATLANTIC COAST ELECTION RESULTS

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08MANAGUA1383**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08MANAGUA1383	2008-11-13 22:00	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4041/millones-de-dolares-sin-control-y-a-discrecion>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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PP RUEHLMC
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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3380
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//J2/J3/J5// PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAGUA 001383

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR KRAAIMORE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/10/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [NU](#)

SUBJECT: NICARAGUA: ATLANTIC COAST ELECTION RESULTS

REF: MANAGUA 1367

Classified By: Amb. Robert J. Callahan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

REF: MANAGUA 1367

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On November 9, in Nicaragua's South Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS) thousands voted in elections for 12 RAAS municipalities, while in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) hundreds turned out to verify their participation in municipal contests scheduled for January 18, ¶2009. Both the RAAS election and the RAAN verification proceeded calmly, despite low turnout and instances of Citizen Power Councils (CPC) meddling. According to the latest election results the Constitutional Liberal Party (PLC) prevailed over Sandinistas (FSLN) in eight of the twelve mayoral and city council races. END SUMMARY

Low Turnout in RAAN & RAAS
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¶2. (C) Nicaraguan media and embassy contacts reported that turn-out for RAAN voter verification and the RAAS municipal elections was lower than expected, despite significant efforts to promote participation. At the more than 300 verification centers in the RAAN, only 5,300 (or approximately 14 percent) of the 37,900 registered voters verified their eligibility to vote in the upcoming January 18, 2009 municipal elections. In the RAAN's largest municipality, Puerto Cabezas, only 2,250 people of 18,000 registered voters (or approximately 12.5 percent) verified their eligibility to vote. (NOTE: Approximately 1,200 or 23 percent of those who verified their eligibility to vote in the RAAN also requested changes to their domicile information. END NOTE) There was a similar trend of low turn-out in the RAAS' municipal election. The highest voter participation was in the Rio Grande municipality where approximately half of the eligible voters participated, while in Kukra Hill, El Rama, and Corn Island, less than 35 percent went to the polls. Nueva Guinea had the lowest participation in the RAAS, with only 10 percent of the registered voters casting ballots. Despite the overall trend, our contacts tell us that there was higher than normal turn-out among Kriol people in Bluefields.

No Violence in RAAN & RAAS; Some CPC Meddling
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¶3. (C) There were no reported major acts of violence in the RAAS; however, our contacts told us that FSLN-controlled CPC groups were intimidating voters at some voting centers in Bluefields, although groups of PLC supporters successfully scared them away in most locations. Embassy contacts also reported that there were no instances of violence by members

of the FSLN, Yatama, and Liberal parties during the voter verification process in the RAAN; however, CPC members were present at each of the five verification tables in Puerto Cabezas. According to Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) rules, it was illegal for third parties to be present at voter verification tables, where private voter information, such as address and party affiliation, were confirmed by individual voters. (COMMENT: Post believes that CPC members want access to this information before the January election in order to locate and harass non-FSLN voters. END COMMENT)

PLC Leads in RAAS; Cross Votes in Bluefields

14. (C) The CSE published initial RAAS election results of 57 percent (or approximately 51,300 votes) for the PLC and 34 percent (or approximately 30,600 votes) for FSLN cast in the twelve municipal contests. The FSLN retained the mayor's office in three municipalities (Pearl Lagoon, Kukra Hill, and Rio Grande) and won in Corn Island. The PLC maintained control over the remaining eight RAAS municipalities, including the closely contested race in Bluefields (see REF A). Initial votes for Bluefields' mayor candidate Dr. Harold Bacon were higher than for the six city council members that ran with him under the PLC banner, indicating that voters were crossing their votes instead of voting a straight party ticket.

Death Threats against ALN Candidate

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15. (C) As reported previously (see REF A) the ALN Bluefields mayor candidate Dean Hodgson was considering renouncing his candidacy to form a unity ticket with the PLC candidate to prevent the FSLN candidate from winning. Up until days before the election, he was in negotiations with PLC party officials, but did not renounce. After the election Hodgson told us that he and his family were threatened by FSLN party members two weeks prior to the election if he renounced his candidacy. (COMMENT: It is widely believed that the ALN candidates would split the liberal vote in Bluefields. END COMMENT)

Some RAAS Election Irregularities

16. (C) The media reported several instances of election irregularities and possible election fraud. The Municipal Election Council (CEM) of Bluefields received allegations of over 900 voting ballots missing for the predominately PLC communities of Kukra River and Punta Gorda. There were also complaints of administrative criminal negligence in the removal of election identity documents (cedulas) needed in order to vote. In Pearl Lagoon, the PLC legal representative filed a complaint with the local CEM regarding the illegal annulment of ballots from five voting centers in Pueblo Nuevo, El Pedregal and Ponder. The votes from these three communities were equivalent to 296 votes for the PLC and 42 for the FSLN. (NOTE: Had the votes been included, the PLC would have won in Pearl Lagoon. END NOTE) FSLN representatives allege that the PLC transported voters within the RAAS to areas that would help them win. In Karawala (in Rio Grande), the PLC legal representative filed a complaint with the CEM alleging that Yatama party members from the RAAN's Prinzapolka traveled to the RAAS to vote for the FSLN candidate. The Rio Grande CEM, Alisio Lopez remarked that PLC activists on election-day had surrounded the CEM office and chanted death threats against him. Six people were wounded after Lopez called for help from the local naval forces to disperse the crowd.

COMMENT

¶7. (C) The RAAN verification process and the RAAS elections on November 9 were generally calm and violence free, with a few exceptions. The PLC retained its historical majority in eight of the RAAS municipalities, losing only one new municipality to the FSLN, Corn Island, since the last municipal elections of 2004. The PLC lost in Corn Island, in part, because it chose a party operative who was a poor politician to oppose a popular FSLN candidate. There were claims by both PLC and FSLN of voter manipulation in the contested elections of Rio Grande and Pearl Lagoon. The CPCs were less of a factor in the RAAS elections than in the RAAN voter verification process, where the FSLN / CPCs have been historically much stronger because of their alliance with Yatama. The next big contest is the RAAN municipal elections in January, where the FSLN is poised to win, unless a unity opposition movement can be formed. After this election, there will be one more election in the RAAN and RAAS for regional offices scheduled for March 2010, where we believe that the FSLN is planning on sweeping all contests in order to consolidate control over this part of Nicaragua.

CALLAHAN